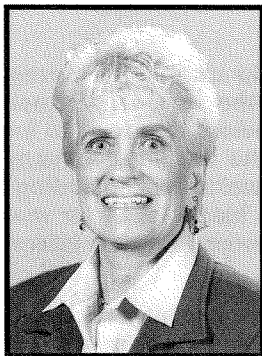


Hammerstrom's

for the people
in the 17th Senate District

Hotline



State Senator

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NATIONAL CHILD PASSENGER SAFETY WEEK FEBRUARY 13-19 In recognition of National Child Passenger Safety Week, the Michigan Office of Highway Safety Planning (OHSP) reminds parents and caregivers of the importance of child safety seats and safety belts. When traveling in a vehicle, young children should ride in child safety seats, which are designed to protect them by spreading the forces of a crash over their entire body. Children who have outgrown child safety seats should be restrained in a booster seat, which lifts the child so their safety belt properly fits—and protects—they. The National Highway Traffic Safety Association recommends booster seats for children from about age 4 and 40 pounds to at least age 8, unless the child is 4' 9".

DID YOU KNOW? The Michigan safety belt law requires that all children under the age of 4 be properly restrained in child safety seats; makes seat belt use mandatory for all drivers and front seat passengers; and requires that children 4 to 15 years of age be properly buckled in either the front or rear seat.

STATE CONSERVATION PROGRAM REOPENS ENROLLMENT The Michigan Department of Agriculture (MDA) recently announced the reopening of enrollment for Michigan's Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP), a program that gives Michigan farmers an opportunity to improve and protect water quality and enhance wildlife habitat on their farms. One of the targeted watersheds is the River Raisin area, which includes parts of Monroe, Jackson, and Washtenaw Counties. CREP is a voluntary program that provides incentives for farmers and private landowners in 29 counties to implement conservation practices. Farmers and landowners who participate in this program will receive reimbursement for establishing practices, incentive payments for sign up, and rental payments for the length of the contract. The program is housed at MDA and is a cooperative effort among the U.S. Department of Agriculture, MDA, Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR), and the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ). In addition to state and federal agencies, several other organizations, including Pheasants Forever, Ducks Unlimited, Cabela's, Michigan State University, Michigan Farm Bureau, Local Conservation Districts, County Drain Commissioners, The Nature Conservancy, and Michigan United Conservation Clubs support the program. For more information in regard to CREP, please contact MDA at 517-335-4172, or visit www.michigan.gov/mda.

GETTING MICHIGAN HEALTHY The state Surgeon General kicked off the Michigan Steps Up campaign, a program designed to help Michigan residents lead healthier lifestyles. According to information from the state Department of Community Health (MDCH), moving more, eating better, and not smoking are three key behaviors that lead to longer life and improved health. The healthy lifestyles campaign features an interactive website. The website, www.michiganstepsup.org, contains all of the tools Michigan residents need to start improving their personal health, including personal planning tips that help individuals set and track goals, free healthy recipes and snack ideas, ideas for making healthy choices when eating out, daily health tips, and links to hundreds of health-related resources. Anyone interested can also call 1-877-422-4244 for additional information about the Michigan Steps Up initiative.

TAXPAYER'S GUIDES NOW AVAILABLE 2005 Michigan Taxpayer's Guides are now available at township and city halls, libraries, post offices, and senior centers throughout the 17th District. The booklet includes a summary of new tax laws, including state regulations on property taxes, homestead property tax credits, farmland and open space tax credits, and the Single Business Tax. The publication is distributed each year in an effort to keep constituents informed of important changes that are necessary to file taxes correctly and to prevent delays in anticipated refunds. A sample tax form and phone numbers for additional assistance are also included. To request a Taxpayer's Guide, please call my office, toll-free, at 1-888-477-8238.

If you would like to receive future issues of Hammerstrom's Hotline via e-mail,
please contact me at SenBHammerstrom@senate.michigan.gov